

Revelation 5

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

In the right hand of God was a book; He alone is the legal custodian of Creation (Psalm 24:1).

Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's , and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

It was sealed with seven seals. This is the book (scroll) that we are concerned with in this chapter of Revelation. Scrolls usually had writing on both sides, and the most important details were on the inside of them, while there was a summary of the contents on the outside. It should be noted that there are not seven scrolls, instead it is a single scroll sealed seven times. Such a scroll as this could only be opened by the one who owned it, therefore it is of great significance that Jesus alone could unseal it, and must Himself be God.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

A mighty angel (maybe Gabriel whose name means “mighty one of God”) cried out, “Who is worthy to unseal the scroll?” This scroll of prophecy regarding the seven judgements would remain unknown until someone could be found who is worthy. This exercise was for John’s understanding to show that no human or angel was capable of breaking the seals. Heaven already knew who was worthy to unseal the scroll. Indeed no redeemed man or angel is worthy enough to open the scroll. Since “there is none good but one, that is, God”, Jesus must be God (Mark 10:18).

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

No person (human) in Heaven, on earth, or in Hell was worthy to open the book – not even to look upon it. This shows that there are people in Heaven already, just as there are in Hell. It also proves that believers do not become “little gods”, for they are still not worthy to do as Jesus alone can do; they are not worthy even to look upon the book in God’s hands.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

John sobbed when he realised that no one would come forward to open the scroll. He must have reflected upon this as he considered his own person. Did he breakdown because he saw his own unworthiness too?

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

One of the twenty-four elders comforted him by encouraging him to look upon Jesus. Jesus, as the Lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9).

Genesis 49:9 Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

He is the Root of David (Matthew 1:1; Isaiah 11:1, 10) – the Messiah, the Perfect Man, had the power to open the scroll.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Isaiah 11:1,10 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: [10] And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

He is victorious over Satan, sin and death through His blood which was spilt for sinners (Colossians 2:14-15).

Colossians 2:14-15 **Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.**

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

John turned to see the Lion of Judah, but instead he saw the Lamb of God. This Lamb is Jesus, the Saviour of sinners. Jesus is called “Lamb” 27 times in Revelation. “As it had been slain” or “as though it had been slain” reveals that Christ will bear the scars of His crucifixion throughout eternity (Luke 24:40; John 20:20, 27).

Luke 24:40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet.

John 20:20, 27 **And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. [27] Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.**

The Lamb appeared to have seven horns and seven eyes. Animals use their horns as weapons against others or as a show of strength. Horns became symbols of power and authority in the ancient world. Since the number seven speaks of perfection and completeness, it is likely that the seven horns symbolise Christ’s total dominion and omnipotence.

Being omnipotent, the Lord sees everything, as the “seven eyes” may indicate. This is connected with the “seven Spirits of God”,

being the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit in the world, especially in delivering the message of salvation in Christ (Psalm 139:1-10).

Psalm 139:1-10 O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

The Lamb, probably now in human form, came and took the scroll from God's hand. This means also, that He alone could read, interpret, and broadcast the message contained within the scroll. This part of John's vision can be compared with that of Daniel's when He saw the 'Son of Man' standing before the "Ancient of Days" to receive dominion, glory and the kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).

Daniel 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

Immediately the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures took golden harps and vials full of aroma. Incense was burned each morning and evening in the Tabernacle (Exodus 37:25-26).

Exodus 37:25-26 And he made the incense altar of shittim wood: the length of it was a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit; it was foursquare; and two cubits was the height of it; the horns thereof were of the same. And he overlaid it with pure gold, both the top of it, and the sides thereof round about, and the horns of it: also he made unto it a crown of gold round about.

The aroma depicts the prayers of the saints. Our prayers are never forgotten before God (Psalm 141:2).

Psalm 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

They sang a new song to the Lamb of God who redeemed them at a great price (Ephesians 1:7).

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

They praised Him because He was worthy to open the scroll and reveal its contents, and also in anticipation of the final victory over evil. They worshipped Him as the Saviour of the whole world because His blood purchased salvation. This salvation was not for a mythical elect but for all men on earth who respond to the Gospel

call, since all have sinned and Christ died for all sinners (Romans 5:8; Galatians 3:13; 1 Timothy 2:6).

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.

1 Timothy 2:6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Notice that they come from all tribes, languages, people and nations, for God indeed loves the entire world (John 3:16).

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

He wants them to be saved (2 Peter 3:9).

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

No wonder the Gospel of the Cross needs to be taken to all of humanity (Matthew 28:18-20).

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

They praised Him for making them spiritual kings and priests ready to inhabit the New Jerusalem. All true believers already are a “royal priesthood” and “a holy nation” (1 Peter 2:5-10).

1 Peter 2:5-10 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

They will reign with Him on earth throughout the Millennium and on the New Earth (Revelation 20:6; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Timothy 2:12).

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

This worship caused the countless numbers of saved souls already in Heaven to rejoice also. The figure presented to us in the text simply means “myriads of myriads” or “one hundred million” (see Daniel 7:10).

Daniel 7:10 A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Job asks, “Is there any number of his armies?” (Job 25:3). The number might express a numberless host of people from our perspective rather than an exact figure. One third of the angels fell with Satan, but God’s angels are still an innumerable host (Hebrews 12:22).

Hebrews 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

They sang of Christ’s, power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing. How could they honour Him this way if He were not God? Seven qualities are mentioned here and Christ possesses them in their fullness.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory,

and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

John heard the universal worship of the whole of creation (Psalm 148; 150).

Psalm 148 Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass. Praise the LORD from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: Fire, and hail; snow, and vapour; stormy wind fulfilling his word: Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: Beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: Kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth: Both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: Let them praise the name of the LORD: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven. He also exalteth the horn of his people, the praise of all his saints; even of the children of Israel, a people near unto him. Praise ye the LORD.

Psalm 150 Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

Every part of creation that took breath or was a living creature of any kind sang praise to the Godhead. Notice that such praise is eternal. It appeared as though the whole of nature rejoiced in God. The inhabitants of Heaven will never tire in worshipping the Lord.

There are four songs of praise sung before the Throne (4:11; 5:9, 12-13).

Revelation 4:11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Revelation 5:9, 12-13 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. [12] Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

The four angelic beings sang their Amen to the song of creation. The twenty-four elders bowed before God to worship Him again.